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SUBJECT: TURKEY: IRAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS: NO STATEMENT  
EXPECTED

REF: STATE 25587

Classified By: Political Counselor Janice G. Weiner, reasons 1.4, b, d

¶1. (C) It is not Turkish practice to issue a statement on any country's elections, MFA Iran deskoff Mehmet Sekerci told us March 12, and he was confident Turkey will not do so following Iran's parliamentary elections. He pledged, however, to convey our points to his superiors. Turkish Parliament Speaker Toptan can be expected to send a congratulatory letter to the new Majlis speaker, but it will almost certainly not include criticism of the parliamentary election process.

¶2. (C) Turkey shares some of our concerns about Iran's parliamentary elections. The system is bizarre and deficient, according to Sekerci. But he said the elections, for all their shortcomings, are taking place within Iran's constitutional parameters. Estimating that about eighty percent of the "reformers" have been excluded, Turkey does not view the Majlis elections as a major political development in Iran. Sekerci nonetheless hoped the recent adoption of UNSC resolution 1803 would not damage the more mainstream conservatives' electoral prospects. Larijani, he said, is a hard-core regime supporter, but he and his supporters' conduct over the years demonstrate a tendency toward moderation, or at least a willingness to listen, not shared by Ahmadinejad's clique.

¶3. (C) Emphasizing that he was speaking off the record, Sekerci said Turkey knows that, with Ahmadinejad, it is dealing with a fanatic whose apocalyptic world view does not easily accommodate a secular, Sunni country, like Turkey. But even within Iran's more radical conservative wing, the GOT senses competing views. Consistent with Turkey's foreign policy priority of strengthening economic, political, cultural and security ties with neighboring countries, he said Turkey will continue to engage Iran, even while fully implementing UNSC sanctions resolutions on Iran's nuclear program.

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